



A GROUP OF BUILDINGS, STILLMAN INSTITUTE, TUSCALOOSA, ALA.

From Tuscaloosa to Luebo on the Kassai River is a far cry, but God has in a wonderful way permitted us to bridge these thousands of miles and the two places are now closely connected. The story may be told in a few words.

Wm. H. Shepherd, a Negro lad, came to the school in 1885. He had been just a poor barefoot boy, not unlike thousands who pass unnoticed on our streets. A Virginia lady invited him to a Sunday-school and discovered his aptness to learn, prayed with him and said, "William, I hope you will study hard and some day go to Africa as a missionary."

A Mission in Africa

In 1889, Dr. Stillman and the members of his faculty at the institute memorialized the General Assembly to establish a mission in the Congo Free State. They stated that a recent graduate of the Institute had dedicated his life to this project and that a splendid young white man was ready to go to Africa. The Assembly took favorable action.

In 1890, William H. Shepherd and Samuel H. Lapsley penetrated the heart of Africa, bent on establishing a mission station at Luebo, in the Congo Free State. Before either had learned the language, Lapsley returned to the coast 1,500 miles away, to arrange for a grant of land from the state, but fell a victim to fever. Shepherd waited in vain for his return, but, undaunted, he held the outpost, learned the language, won the hearts of the people, and began a most remarkable missionary work, which now numbers 7,000 converts, and organized the center of a Christian community of 20,000 peaceful and hopeful natives.

Four other graduates have joined him there, and others are preparing to carry light to the Dark Continent.

Practical Work at Stillman Institute

Rev. James G. Snedecor, LL.D.

Superintendent Stillman Institute, Tuscaloosa, Ala. At the Clifton Conference, August 19, 1908

STILLMAN INSTITUTE is primarily a theological seminary. It was born in the heart of a Presbyterian pastor, Rev. Charles A. Stillman, who felt that the real need of his colored neighbors was to hear the gospel intelligently preached.

We did not organize it especially to make Presbyterian preachers, but good Bible preachers. It was organized on very simple lines. The English Bible was the principal text-book, and after thirty years we still keep it to the front.

Our academic department was an after-thought, forced on us by the lack of preparation of many of the ordained ministers who came to us for instruction. Many of them were middle-aged men who could scarcely read. In later years our students are generally younger and better prepared, and we are raising our standards as fast as we can.

We never have introduced Greek or Hebrew. We believe they play a very minor part in the practical work of our country preachers. There are so many more useful things to be learned, and the smattering of a dead language is often the little learning that makes a fool instead of a wise man.

The building in the center of our grounds is an old "antebellum" mansion. Our campus was the front yard. Some people around Tuscaloosa say it was a sad fate for such premises. We call it a kind Providence.

This conference has so filled my heart that I find myself scarcely able to speak coherently. I would like to mention one